Intergalactic Declaration

Level of difficulty: 1
Recommended age:
> 6 years.

Objectives:
- Understand the role human rights play in ensuring basic needs.

Summary: Students draw up a declaration of rights for the school.

Time: 45 min.

Lesson Type: Indoors, quiet.

Group Size: Any size.

Materials: Newspaper for making hats, a whiteboard on which to write the declaration and whiteboard markers, photocopies of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

Instructions

- Instruct students to make hats and to write roles on them. Ensure they choose roles that reflect a wide diversity of living beings, as many distinct roles as there are students, and which cover the needs of the entire universe. Roles may include musician, giraffe, queen, priest, extraterrestrial, Paralympic champion, soldier, tree, etc.
- In thinking about their roles, have students decide what is important to them at school and their needs. Instruct each student to draw up a list of eight or more points and convert them into articles of declaration. As a cue, instruct them to start with "Everyone has the right to..."
- Next, have students share their lists and find common points, differences, and incompatibilities. Inform them they must now write a single Intergalactic Declaration that brings together all articles in a logical order and meets the needs of the entire universe. The declaration should contain no more than 30 articles.
- Have students step out of their roles and reconsider whether the declaration is applicable to real life and good functioning at school.

Debrief and Conclusions

Questions: How did the process of creating the Intergalactic Declaration go? What rights did you prioritize? What did you leave out? Were all your articles feasible? Is it important they be? Why or why not? Did your articles conflict? Does it make sense that a giraffe participate in the Declaration? What about a tree? Why or why not? How are human rights of use?

Have students relate their declaration to the four kinds of rights mentioned previously. Questions: What rights did you consider from each of these kinds? Which did you ignore? Have students compare their conclusions to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Questions: What are some similarities and differences? Are you surprised at all? Which of the Universal Declaration rights are more upheld and which less?

Tips for the facilitator

To help motivate students, consider extending the lesson outside the classroom to the school.
For more on the Universal Declaration of the UN, see http://www.un.org/en/rights/.

Source: School for a Culture of Peace (2009). Juegos de paz: Caja de Herramientas para educar para una cultura de paz. Madrid: La Catarata.

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Get involved

Encourage students to know their human rights, respect the rights of those around them, and denounce violations of rights wherever they may occur, whether at school, home, in their cities, or the world.
Have them draw up a list of exceptionalities for those with special needs, e.g. persons with glasses, non-native speakers, disabled persons, vegetarians or vegans, etc. Discuss ways to ensure these persons have as much right and access to school activities as everyone else.